



BFA Press Release, 28 November 2007

## **Organic farmers and consumers lose their choice by Vic & NSW GE canola green light**

"The announcement today by Victorian and NSW governments that they will allow the planting of Genetically Engineered food crops next year is a major affront to the organic food industry, and in turn consumers in Australia, said Scott Kinnear, BFA GMO spokesperson today.

"The planting of GE herbicide tolerant canola will make it impossible to know whether organic or non-GE farmers are at risk, where GE canola has been planted and its pollen remains floating in the environment. Unless farmers undertake expensive tests they will not know if they have been contaminated.

"Organic and non-GE food processors will be burdened with additional requirements for tests of grains and oils to manage and eliminate contamination risk. In addition costly supply chain segregation such as containerisation will need to be considered by grain farmers and food processors. Other potential costs may include expensive food recalls where contamination has occurred.

"The support for GE canola flies in the face of significant evidence of costs to the economy, health and environment presented to the panels in both Victoria and NSW. The BFA put in a submission to both governments outlining substantial issues in all three areas and it is of significant concern that our submission appears to have been completely overlooked."

"The organic food industry is the global good news food story that is growing at 15-20% per year. Governments would reap benefits for the environment and public health by supporting more organic food production rather than GE foods," said Mr Kinnear.

Chairman of the BFA's Organic Standards Committee, which presides over the Australian Organic Standard (AOS) by which the majority of the country's organic farmers are certified, noted that "this step will mean the inevitable unleashing of pollens that cannot be completely regulated nor controlled in the open environment and the food and seed chain. This will restrict choice and freedom, particularly for organic farmers and a wider range of consumers, under current regulatory and market arrangements, said Dr Andrew Monk.

"In the absence of sufficient labeling regulation which gives consumers a transparent and complete choice of GMO and non GMO, the only real choice in the market place for non GMO foods will remain certified organic products, which prohibit such technologies as GMOs. This proposal by Victoria and NSW to potentially allow the release of food crop GMOs into the environment next year will impact on this sector by the admitted inevitable contamination of such crops and their seed lines. It will also risk future export markets and further burden that sector with compliance and regulatory costs.

"Both the National Standard, regulated for export by AQIS, as well as the Australian Organic Standard which regulates both for domestic and international markets, prohibit any presence of GMOs in organic food products. Their presence would lead to the decertification of such products and their removal from the marketplace, placing further cost, and loss of choice, on consumers and producers alike." noted Dr Monk.

ENDS

For comment on:

GMOs: Scott Kinnear mob 0419 881 729;

Organic Standards: Dr Andrew Monk mob 0429 96 0044

BFA Media: Holly Vyner, email [media@bfa.com.au](mailto:media@bfa.com.au), ph 07 3350 5716 ext 233



Quality  
Endorsed  
Company

ISO9001 Lic12619  
Standards Australia

**BIOLOGICAL FARMERS OF  
AUSTRALIA CO-OP LTD**  
ABN 75 699 664 781

HEAD OFFICE - BRISBANE  
PO Box 530 L1 766 Gympie Rd  
CHERMESIDE QLD 4032  
Ph: +61 (0)7 3350 5716  
Fax: +61 (0)7 3350 5996  
[info@bfa.com.au](mailto:info@bfa.com.au)

SOUTHERN DIVISION OFFICE  
PO Box 503 1 Gawler St  
NURI00TPA SA 5355  
Ph: +61 (0)8 8562 2769  
Fax: +61 (0)8 8562 3034  
[info@bfa.com.au](mailto:info@bfa.com.au)

[www.bfa.com.au](http://www.bfa.com.au)